



U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Emergency Preparedness & Response Directorate

*Disasters declared in
Indiana and Ohio after
severe storms and floods*

Severe thunderstorms, high winds and record rainfalls during the July 4th holiday weekend left hundreds of north central Indiana residents and businesses flooded. The record rainfall also resulted in flooding of local streets, basements and homes along the Wabash River, which overflowed its banks after the heavy storms. Many residents were forced to evacuate their homes due to the water and storm damage. The resulting damage and cleanup from the storms prompted Indiana Governor Frank L. O’Bannon to request federal assistance to help with the costs of recovery . On July 11, President George W. Bush declared 34 Indiana counties a federal disaster area (DR-1476), allowing FEMA to provide federal assistance to Indiana homes and businesses in the affected counties.

Region personnel in conjunction with Indiana State officials began the recovery process immediately following the declaration, opening a Disaster Field Office (DFO) in the town of Kokomo on Sunday, July 13. Teams of Community Relations Officers were dispatched to the affected areas to inform residents about the process to apply for federal benefits, providing fliers and information through a variety of local volunteer agencies, businesses, churches and other community and county organizations. Disaster Relief Centers (DRC) are expected to open in several counties to allow residents access to SBA officials and other organizations providing assistance.



In west central Ohio, six counties experienced severe flooding as a result of the same storms that swept across Indiana. Ohio Governor Bob Taft requested and received federal disaster assistance for six counties (DR-1478) on July 15 to receive individual assistance. A Disaster Field Office (DFO) was established in the town of Cridersville and FEMA personnel were deployed to begin the recovery process.

*Illinois First Responder
Training Center Opens*

See story on page 2



FEMA Fire Grant helps build new facility for first responder training

On July 19, 2003, the first class of the McDonough County Emergency Responder School was held in Macomb, Illinois. The school's unique design is a direct result of input from local fire departments, Macomb Police Department, McDonough District Hospital, and Spoon River College. Topics and activities of the school will help develop and sharpen skills and knowledge of all emergency responders and community leaders.

The First Responder School was funded in part from an Assistance to Firefighters Grant of \$49,275 awarded to the Macomb Fire Department as part of the 2002 program. The funds, along with additional money from the city of Macomb, were used to help build the state-of-the-art facility which boasts a hose, ladder, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus drill structure, training mobile home, and other facilities.

More than 150 firefighters and first responders attended the school according to Lt. Roger Lunt, school director and Macomb firefighter. The First Responder School attracted local departments from Illinois, Iowa, and several other states. Topics in the school include fire ground basics, lifesaving drills, pump operations, hazards and treatment of injuries, and fire scene management. Instructors at the school are a cross-section of emergency and firefighting professionals, many of whom are from the University of Illinois Fire Service Institute.

The first class began with a special presentation from Chief Mark Wessel of the Keokuk, Iowa Fire Department. Chief Wessel, President of the Iowa Association of Professional Fire Chiefs, discussed the issues surrounding an incident in which three Keokuk firefighters were killed.

At 1:00 P.M. a ceremony was held commemorating the opening of the First Responder School. Members of the Western Illinois University (Macomb) Band played the national anthem as the American flag was raised over a small monument at the entrance to the school. The opening ceremony was attended by local, county, and state officials, as well as representatives of Congressman Lane Evans.

Among the dignitaries present at the dedication were State Senator John Sullivan, McDonough County Board Chairman Bob Harwick, Jay Franey from the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal, and honorary guest 8-year-old Rhett Fink, who is a frequent visitor to the Macomb Fire Station with his grandparents whom he visits while in town.



The McDonough County Illinois First Responders school has this structural training model to train firefighters and other emergency personnel. The school opened July 19 in Macomb, Illinois.



Building renovation set at Regional Office

General Services Administration is planning to renovate our building for the future relocation of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (BICE) which is now part of DHS. The first phase of the project is preliminarily scheduled to begin September 1 and involves the following activities:

- Demolition of the third floor
- Partial demolition of the second floor
- Partial demolition of the basement
- Construction of a new emergency stairwell on the west-side of the building.
- Closure of LaSalle Street to begin construction of a new loading dock. The entrance to Immigration will remain open until a later phase of the project.
- Restriction of the courtyard. The courtyard will be limited to regular deliveries and construction activities. Parking will no longer be available in the courtyard, but will be accommodated at the Federal Garage located at 450 S. Federal St.

An all-hands meeting was held on July 31, during which representatives from GSA and the construction contractors presented additional information and details about the building project. GSA and contractor representatives answered questions and listened to concerns from employees.

Training increases employee knowledge of Social Security benefits

An “In-Service” training session was held at regional headquarters on July 23, to provide information regarding Social Security programs and benefits to employees. The session was arranged by Region V Training Officer Sharon Wolf and Mary Mahler, Regional Communications Director for Social Security who has been on special assignment to the region. The training was facilitated by Social Security Public Affairs Specialist Erin Conway, and covered a wide range of topics including the history of Social Security, retirement, survivor benefits and Medicare.

Ms. Conway answered questions from the employees about pensions, eligibility, and benefits. She also provided booklets to each participant about the Social Security program.

Regional Director Ed Buikema attended the training and felt it was very beneficial. “Sessions like these are extremely valuable to help people better understand the Social Security system,” Buikema said. “Retirement and benefits are issues we all need to consider, regardless of our age or how long we’ve been in the work force.”

More information about Social Security programs can be obtained on the web by logging on to www.socialsecurity.gov

Quarterly RISC focuses on key preparation and planning issues

The quarterly Regional Interagency Steering Committee (RISC) meeting was held July 15-16 at Region V headquarters. Two topics, the National Response Plan (NRP) National Incident Management System (NIMS), and Catastrophic Planning highlighted the meeting. Bruce Pfaff and Jim Stone were facilitators in the Catastrophic Planning session which was designed to consider actions to address shortfalls and examine alternatives to traditional planning. Scenarios were discussed using examples of an earthquake in the New Madrid fault zone, and discussing the traditional response methods, as well as a more proactive pre-disaster response which would allow for improved identification of resources and capabilities with damage estimates.

The NRP discussion analyzed the baseline goals of the new plan and a “bridge” for transitioning from the current Federal Response Plan. Among the principles being considered are the role of state and local government authorities, primacy of preventing terrorism, the importance of effective communication, and a seamless transition between operations and authorities.

Around the Region



- On July 23, the Newport Community Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Plan Exercise (Illinois portion) was conducted in Vermilion and Edgar Counties, and Champaign, IL.
- On July 21-25, Radiological Emergency Preparedness staff members conducted the annual exercise of the D.C. Cook Nuclear Power Plant in Stevensville, Michigan.
- Regional Director Ed Buikema was the luncheon speaker at a Senior Executives Roundtable on Operational Risk Management, sponsored by the Operations Council. The Roundtable was held on July 23 in Chicago, and attendees included senior executives from the city's largest financial institutions.
- FEMA Mitigation has launched a new web based system for grant applications for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program and the FMA program. Staff traveled to Minnesota July 31 and August 1 to train state staff on the new application system. The e-Grants system will allow the states more flexibility with applications.

Did You Know?



Is a monthly feature highlighting the activities of Region V employees

Goodbye to Mary Mahler who completed her four month assignment with FEMA and returns to her position at Social Security for an assignment in Baltimore, MD.

Jim Stone, R&R Division, left FEMA effective July 31 to attend seminary school. Jim had been with us for 2 1/2 years, and the region family wishes him well in his future endeavors.

Welcome back to Woodie Curtis, NPD Technical Services Branch Chief who is returning to work following recent surgery.

John Simpson, NPD, returned from military duty in the Middle East. Welcome back, John!

Congratulations to the following employees who received service pins this month:

Terry Reuss-Fell	25 years
David Schein	25 years
Deborah Razor	25 years
Ken Hughes	20 years
Maxine Kinikin	15 years
Maria Poremba	15 years
Terry Connors-Hartman	15 years
Jeanne Kern	15 years
Jim Opoka	15 years

Members of the Ohio disaster team meet to discuss the issues at the Disaster Field Office in Cridersville. Pictured in the center (l to r) are Federal Coordinating Officer Ron Sherman, Regional Director Ed Buikema, and Ohio State Coordinating Officer Rich Roman and staff members from FEMA and the state.





Flooded streets and businesses in Decatur, Indiana resulted from severe thunderstorms. A total of 34 counties were declared federal disaster areas (DR-1476)

Region V Flood Photos



Regional Director's Message



Edward G. Buikema

Recent storms across the Midwest have caused massive flooding in many areas, resulting in damage to homes, businesses and public facilities. As is often the case when these disasters occur, the affected states are overwhelmed by the magnitude and cost of the recovery. Federal disasters were declared in Indiana and Ohio, as again our region must respond to the needs of our citizens.

I am particularly proud of the men and women from the region who have been tasked with responding to these disasters. Long hours and tireless efforts are certainly a part of what we have come to expect as routine aspects of our mission. Your extraordinary effort, focus and cooperation should never be taken for granted. The personal sacrifices made by each of you in an effort to help disaster victims is highly commendable. In addition to the recovery teams, we should also recognize those who have stepped up to provide coverage for teammates who are deployed.

As we move closer to the end of FY-03, we should begin to see some movement with regard to budgetary issues and other changes taking place within DHS/FEMA. We are involved in the process of reviewing and assisting with finalization of the new National Response Plan. As always, we will keep everyone abreast of new information as we receive it. Meanwhile, continue to work with the dedication and professionalism you have displayed in the past. Together we *are* making a difference.

AVUE streamlines job application process

On Tuesday, July 22, representatives of AVUE Digital Services (ADS) came to the regional office to present information about the new FEMA job application system. The new system, which is now operational, provides on-line application capability to FEMA employees and streamlines the process of tracking applications. The system allows for entering KSA's, viewing posted job openings, applying for jobs and updating applications. Each employee can keep track of the status of jobs applied for within FEMA, and the site also has links to USA Jobs for applications with other federal agencies. The site will also allow employees to stop during the process and return to complete the application. Users of the system can also withdraw from consideration for a job to which they previously applied. Resumes or other electronic documentation may be attached to your profile. Employees may access the AVUE system and create your profile via the web at www.avuecentral.com



Indiana DFO - Regional Director Ed Buikema (center) meets with members of the disaster field team at the Disaster Field Office. Pictured with Director Buikema are (l to r) Georgette Waterford, FCO Tom Costello, Bertha Curtis, David Skarosi, and Alan Dobson

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